Title: New Modelled Cavaliers

Abstract: This discussion considers the military and royal chaplain Edward Symmons' description of the cavalier, delivered in a sermon to Prince Rupert's troops in 1644. It briefly contextualizes Symmons' description within the hostile description of the cavalier produced by preaching and print sympathetic to Parliament. It then moves to outline the findings of the new research and analysis which examines the culture, writing and afterlife of mid-century Royalism. This work revises the currency of the term "Cavalier" both for historical and literary scholarship of the seventeenth century.

Keywords: Cavalier, Edward Symmonds, definitions.

Author: Ruth Connolly

Affiliation: Newcastle University

Address: Percy Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE1 7RU

Tel: (0191) 2088133

Email: ruth.connolly@ncl.ac.uk

Disclosure Statement

The author confirms that she has no financial interest or benefit arising from this research.

New Modelled Cavaliers

When he preached to Prince Rupert's army in 1644, Edward Symmons, army chaplain and future editor of *Eikon Basilike,* knew exactly what a Cavalier was.

> A complete Cavalier is a Child of Honour, a Gentleman well borne and bred; that loves his King for conscience sake, of a clearer countenance and bolder looke then other men, because of a more loyall heart: He dares neither oppose his Princes will, nor yet disgrace his righteous cause, by his carriage or expressions: He is furnished with the qualities of Piety, Prudence, Justice, Liberality, Goodnesse, Honesty; He is amiable in his behaviour, couragious in his undertakings, discreet and gallant in all his executions: he is throughly sensible of the least wrong that is offered to his Soveraigne, and is a professed enemy to all Rebells: the aimes of his sword are onely to dissever the malignity of those forces that have conspired the ruine of Monarchy and Innocency: he feares no evill thing to come upon himselfe, but contemns all dangers that look towards him: he dares accept of deaths challenge to meet it in the field, and yet can embrace it as a speciall friend when it comes into his chamber, where he is alwayes making provision for its better entertainment: in a word, he is the onely Reserve of English Gentility and ancient valour, and hath rather chose to burie himselfe in the Tombe of Honour, then to see the Nobility of his Nation vassalaged, the Dignity of his Countrey captivated by any base domesticke enemy, or by any forraigne fore-conquered foe. This is a compleat Cavalier, and if

> any of you be not according to this Character, believe me you are not right, nor the men you ought to be:[1]

As he made clear to his auditors, Symmons was addressing the nature of the king's "true soldier" in the context of a highly successful Parliamentarian narrative which cast Cavaliers as debauched, drunken and blasphemous. Conceding that the depiction was not entirely based on fiction, and pleading with commanders to exercise greater discipline over their men, Symmons sought to remind his audience of who they were supposed to be. The Cavalier visibly performs loyalty, distinguished in his demeanour by "a clearer countenance and bolder looke then other men". His self-discipline and instant obedience contrasts with the generic "Rebells" who have called him into being. Because the Cavalier possesses –in fact embodies - this affective relationship to the monarchy, his conduct becomes a kind of metonym for the King's conduct. Symmons' Cavalier is a firmly English guardian of the "ancient rights" (38) which Marvell's Justice would plead in vain some five years later.[2] Descriptions of Cavaliers as "foreign godless papists" were regularly issued from the hostile pulpits and presses of London, but in Symmons' rhetoric, the Cavalier is a stable representative of enduring English values drawn, reluctantly, to combat the disruptive radicalism of political innovators.[3] It is this account of the Cavalier, which, with the assistance of historical fiction beginning with Daniel Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and carrying on through Sir Walter Scott and into the nineteenth century, that has endured.[4] That in itself, as Jerome de Groot suggests, tells us much about how the past of the 1640s and 1650s has functioned, and continues to function, in historical memory.[5]

Symmons' ideal is thus a particularly interesting point from which to begin the essays in this special issue. The Cavalier – and the culture which produces him – emerge from these arguments as less stable, less self-confident and far more at home in European contexts than Symmons' carefully crafted description allows. The essays collectively

build on recent scholarship which has sought to focus greater attention on the literature, history and politics of Royalism during and after the civil wars.[6] It identifies routes for its further development especially in the study of the literatures of Royalism. There are significant gaps in existing critical narratives created by retrospectively created and simplified ideas of what Cavalier connotes. In her recent discussion of "Cavalier poetry", Ann Baynes Coiro points out that 'the generic appellation "cavalier" has been a categorical death-knell, implying graceful decline, political failure, self-effacement, a cul-de-sac of literary history". Yet, as she notes, since 'the poetry we call "Cavalier" directly shaped the "short but admirable line" that would rule English poetry for generations, this literary-historical narrative is oddly ahistorical".[7] One step in revising this narrative is to expand this poetry's geographies, a move in line with recent calls to expand the historical study of Royalism beyond its English contexts.[8] The systematic address of the influence of French, Italian, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese poetics and poets on the body of work we think of as "Cavalier" has just begun and Nigel Smith outlines its implications for the field.[9] The tern "Cavalier" as a literary category is of greatest utility, Nick McDowell argues, when it refers to literary features rather than political allegiances. Identifying "Cavalier" with the imitation and translation of Continental forms not only opens up the category to a wider group of poets, it recognises the energy and inspiration that lyric in English drew from European poetics in the seventeenth century. One field where the study of royalism has flourished is women's writing, and Royalist work is regularly read in fruitful juxtaposition with literature by women writing from opposing political standpoints and diverse geographical locations.[10]

Placing this work in dialogue with male writing of a similar diversity introduces another new dynamic to the study of the field. Symmons' injunction to the assembled soldiers proposes a rigidly policed model of homosocial masculinity where the affective ties that matter are between the horseman, his king and his country. Kate Chedgzoy returns the

study of the Cavalier to the aristocratic household to find the spaces where women write "Cavalier" values. Discussing Jane Cavendish's role as a "speaking creative subject[t] of Royalist cultural work", she traces how Cavendish's fashioning of a purposeful dialogue between Royalist masculinities and femininities in her verse functions as an act of political and cultural engagement in wartime.

One of the more intriguing aspects of Symmons' description is his emphasis on the "look" of the Cavalier, the bold unflinching gaze that is the guarantee of loyalty and the promise of valour. The aesthetics and politics of looking are analysed in two discussions of royalist prose and poetry. James Loxley's discussion of the political and critical tensions around the cavalier "arts of praise" explores how practices of looking found in Richard Lovelace's poems to Peter Lely model a set of relationships between artists and poets produce a mutually sustaining integrity that corrects perceptions of epideictic as merely ornamental or trivial.[11] Claire Preston's analysis of how acts of walking and looking are represented using the rhetorical figures of ekphrasis, meronomy and topographia, reiterates that literary depictions of dynamic ocular and perambulatory movement present a form of "visible knowledge".[12] These self-conscious political, intellectual and aesthetic investments in the authority of looking and the politics of display, their origins, and their effects, warrant further investigation.

The route taken by Christopher Burlinson directs us towards the material fabrics worn by Cavaliers. His analysis of the images of vacuous Cavaliers circulating in 1640s anti-Cavalier satire demonstrates how a figurative language of incompleteness and insubstantiality presents the Cavalier as a work of the royalist imagination, existing only as a verbal and visual style. Hero Chalmer's analysis of William Cavendish's treatises on the art of horsemanship explores the instability of cavalier self-presentation from within the work of a figure often presented as the quintessential Cavalier. The one agreement in all early uses of the term Cavalier is that it refers to a horseman. The ruler's mastery

of the skill of riding served as a commonplace image of his mastery of good governance and Cavendish's treatises seek to recuperate the cavalier horseman as an honourable and heroic figure, irreducible to a mere figure of display, through his command of good deportment on horseback. Yet this self-confident image, extended further by Cavendish's use of the image of the centaur to capture the unity of horse and rider his method sought, becomes vulnerable to problems of a "monstrous merging" of rider and horse, an image whose political overtones were as problematic as its connotations of bestiality. The use of non-human bodies to represent the emotions of defeat is also found, Ruth Connolly argues, in Richard Lovelace's *Posthume Poems*. These poems re-enact the intestine struggles of the civil war in literal terms, as poets flay themselves of shirt and skin and monarchical snails excrete cloth-of-gold. The depictions of these much diminished creatures explore the tensions of writing royalist poetry that is deeply invested in the aesthetics and politics of looking and display when the material possessions crucial to that performance of identity are lost.

These new-modelled readings of what these decades meant for and to the "hotter sort of royalist" concentrate on what is seen when we look. That same question informs Jerome de Groot's invitation for scholarship to look differently at the afterlife of the civil wars. Tracing the history of the royal oak as symbol and organising principle of one kind of linear history, he argues for finding a different way to trace the legacy of early modern royalism, one that seeks the spectral traces of the civil wars and their aftermath on the contemporary English landscape. The Cavalier emerges as an unstable polemical position with a shadowy relationship to the historical personages it purports to define but confirmed as a category whose interrogation has more to tell us about the material, political, intellectual and aesthetic contexts, and aftermaths, of the civil wars.

[1] Symmons, *A Militarie Sermon*, 16-17

[2] Marvell, "Horatian Ode".
[3] Roy, "Royalist Reputations," 94-95.

[4] McDowell, "Towards Redefinitions,", 00.

[5] De Groot, "Fugitives, Fields," 00.

[6] See for example Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, De Groot, *Royalist Identities*, Major, *Literatures of Exile*, Corns, ed. *The Royal Image*, McElligott and Smith, *Royalists and Royalism*, McDowell, *Poetry and Allegiance*.

[7] Coiro, "Personal Rule," 206.

[8] Robertson, *Royalists at War*.

[9] Smith, "Cross Channel Cavaliers," McDowell, "Towards Redefinitions," Sousa Garcia, "How the Lusiad got English'd."

[10] See, for example, Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writing*, Chedgzoy, *British Atlantic World*, Ross, *Women, Poetry, and Politics*, Scott-Baumann, *Forms of Engagement*.

[11] Loxley, "Poetry, Portraiture, and Praise."

[12] Preston, "Rhetoric of Observation,", 00.

Bibliography

Burlinson, Christopher. " 'Finest Gossamore': Cavalier Materials and Fragile Metaphors." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Chalmers, Hero. *Royalist Women Writers 1650-1689*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.

----- " 'But not Laughing': Horsemanship and the Idea of the Cavalier in the Writings of William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Chedgzoy, Kate. *Women's Writing in the British Atlantic World: Memory, Place and History, 1550-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

----- "Cavalier and she-majesty: the cultural politics of gender in Jane Cavendish's poetry." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Connolly, Ruth. "Bestiaries of Feeling: Flies, Snails, Toads and Spiders in Richard Lovelace's *Lucasta: Posthume Poems* (1659)." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.[12]

De Groot, Jerome. "Fugitives, Fields, Pubs and Trees." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Loxley, James. "Poetry, Portraiture and Praise." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Major, Philip ed., *Literatures of Exile in the English Revolution and its Aftermath, 1640-1685*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010.

Marvell, Andrew. "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." In *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*. Edited by Nigel Smith, 273-279, 2nd edn. Harlow: Pearson, 2007.

McDowell, Nicholas. *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars: Marvell and the Cause of Wit.* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

----- "Towards Redefinition of Cavalier Poetics." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

McElligott, Jason and David L. Smith, eds. *Royalists and Royalism During the English Civil Wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

----- *Royalists and Royalism During the Interregnum*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010.

Preston, Claire. "The gallery, the eye, and the rhetoric of observation in some seventeenth-century descriptions." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Roebuck, Graham. "Cavalier." In *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination*. Edited by Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, 9-26. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 1999.

Robertson, Barry. *Royalists at War in Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1650*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

Ross, Sarah C.E. *Women, Poetry and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Roy, Ian. "Royalist Reputations: The Cavalier Ideal and the Reality." In *Royalists and Royalism During the English Civil Wars*. Edited by Jason McElligott and David L. Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Scott-Baumann, Elizabeth. *Forms of Engagement: Women, Poetry and Culture 1640-1680*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Smith, Nigel. "Cross-Channel Cavaliers." *The Seventeenth Century* 33, no. 4 (2017): 00-00.

Sousa Garcia, Tiago. " 'How *The Lusiad* Got English'd': Manuel Faria y Sousa, Richard Fanshawe and the First English Translation of *Os Lusíadas*" *Literature Compass* 14, no. 4 (2017): 1-18. doi: 10.1111/lic3.12387

Symmons, Edward. *A Militarie Sermon wherein by the word of God, the nature and disposition of a rebell is discovered, and the Kings true souldier described and characterized*. Oxford: Henry Hall, 1644.

Wilcher, Robert. *The Writing of Royalism, 1628-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.